

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the non-final Office Action dated January 26, 2007, issued in connection with the above-identified application. Claims 1-18 and 35 are all the claims presently pending in the application. With this Response, claims 1, 14-16 and 35 have been amended, and claims 36-40 have been added. No new matter has been introduced by this Response; thus, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 15-16 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Office Action alleges that the steps recited in the claims are abstract ideas and are not sufficiently tied to hardware or do not manipulate hardware. The Applicants respectfully disagree with regards to claims 1, 14, 16 and 35. Independent claims 1, 16 and 35 are directed to a device and systems; thus, these claims primarily recite structure. Additionally, in claim 14, the first two control steps of the claim specifically recite *controlling the input and output of information to and from a first and a second information processing device*. Additionally, the recording step recites *controlling the recording of information*. Thus, independent claim 14 recites steps clearly tied to hardware or that manipulate hardware. With regard to claim 15, the Applicants have amended the claim to overcome the §101 rejection. The amendments to claim 15 are believed to be self-explanatory. The Applicants respectfully request that the §101 rejection to the above claims be withdrawn.

Claims 1-18 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Summers (U.S. Patent No. 6,816,884, hereafter "Summers"). The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 14-16 and 35 to further distinguish over the cited reference. As amended, the claims are directed to an information processing device, system and method that, in pertinent part, include "a substituting step or means" that "substitutes personal information with generic group information." When performing transactions with other users or with a third party, the substitution of personal information with the generic group information conceals the personal information and identity of the user during a transaction. (see, Applicants' Application, Fig. 7 and page 36, line 3-page 37, line 17).

Conversely, Summers is directed to a system and method for selective filtering of incoming e-mail messages. The system in Summers enables a user to specify a desired format

and frequency for receiving e-mail messages from a discussion group. The Office Action relies on col. 11, lines 14-16 for anticipating the claimed substitution step of means. However, as amended, Summers fails to disclose all the features now recited in claims 1, 14-16 and 35. The substitution described in Summers replaces a user's e-mail address with more simplified user information, such as nickname or a first name. The primary purpose for this substitution is to make e-mail messages easier to read. The results of this simplification are illustrated more clearly in Fig. 5E of Summers. As seen in FIG. 5E, the substitution does not include the use of generic group information, but instead includes simplified personal information (e.g., a first name or nickname). Additionally, the identities of the users appear to be known. Thus, the system in Summers does not conceal the identity of a user.

To the contrary, in the present invention, each user in the system is registered to a predetermined community or group. When a user requests information or merchandise from a third party, the user's personal information is converted into generic community or group information. This generic community or group information is substituted for the user's personal information prior to transmitting the request to the third party. Thus, the user's personal information and identity are concealed during the transaction. (see, Applicants' Application, Fig. 7 and page 36, line 3-page 37, line 17).

For these reasons, independent claims 1, 14-16 and 35 (as amended) are distinguished over the cited reference. Likewise, dependent claim 2-13 and 17-18 are distinguished over the cited reference based on their dependency from independent claims 1 and 16. In light of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims in the present application are patentable over the prior art of record. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

If additionally fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Director is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLP

BY



Thomas C. Basso
Reg. No. 46,541
Cust. No. 29175

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